

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

If you recall the gist of the extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) that I read last week, you will note that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) spoke glowingly about Faith (*iman*). He advises us all that we should have faith and progress along the path that will grant us more of it. That path is the straight path (*siratam moustaqim*) for which we pray several times in a day. When we fear Allah as He should be feared and we do our best to unflinchingly obey Him, we will be rewarded with a tranquility that He will drop on our hearts. At one place in the Holy Quran He says:

“O ye who seek the Lord, open your ears and listen! Take heed that there is nothing like perfect conviction which delivers you from sin; conviction gives you the power to do good; and conviction alone can turn you into a lover of God. Can you turn away from evil without perfect conviction? Can you hold your base impulses in check without the help of a sure light? Without this perfect conviction, can anyone bring about any real change in himself? Can you attain to any state of satisfaction and peace of mind without this perfect certainty? Can you at all win any real prosperity without it? In the wide world, is there any atonement which can give you the power to avoid sin which man so much stands in need of? Can the fictitious blood of Jesus, son of Mary, deliver you from sin? O ye Christians, refrain from uttering a monstrous falsehood, even such as would fain break his earth to pieces! For deliverance Jesus, himself had to depend on perfect conviction, He believed with conviction, and was delivered. Woe, indeed, on those Christians who deceive the world by saying they have been delivered by the blood of Jesus Christ even when from head to foot they are drowned in evil. They do not even know who is their God. Their life is one of indulgence and ease; with the intoxication of wine in their head they remain unaware of the life with God; and for them there is no share in the fruits of life as lived in purity. Always remember, therefore, that you cannot come out of the darkness without firm conviction, nor can you get the holy spirit. Blessed are they who have this conviction, and blessed are they who have been delivered from uncertainties and doubts, for they alone shall be delivered of sin; and blessed will you be when this great treasure of firm conviction is given to you, since on that day sin for you will come to an end. Sin and conviction cannot exist together. Would you ever knowingly put your hand into a hole which you see is occupied by a poisonous snake? Or would you remain standing where a shower of red hot stones is coming down from some belching volcano? Or which forms the target of a thunderbolt from the skies? Or where a ferocious lion is likely to attack any moment? Or would you live in a place where a dangerous plague is destroying mankind? Then, if you believe in God with the same

firmness of conviction as you believe in the danger from a snake, or a thunderbolt, or a lion, or from plague, it is not possible that you should defy Him by disobedience, to incur punishment thereby, or that you should want to break the bond of sincerity, and loyalty which binds you to Him.” (Noah’s Ark P 32)

5. He it is Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith to their faith—and to Allāh belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh is All-knowing, Wise—

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ
إِيمَانِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

The take-home message is that we should have faith in Allah and carry on our devotions and Allah will reveal Himself to us. We should all have this aspiration if we want to really know Allah and have certainty in His existence. This conviction is of paramount importance. Speaking about the value of conviction Hazrat Masih Maood (as) tells us:

Now upon listening to this extract we should each ask ourselves whether we have such conviction in our heart. If we have it, well and good. But if we still commit some sins, we should seek a greater conviction so that we might be thoroughly cleansed. Addressing his followers, Hazrat Ahmad (as) says further:

“O ye people who have been called to righteousness and truth, rest fully assured that Divine attraction will take its birth in you, and you will be washed clean of the ugly blot of sin, only when your hearts become brimful of firm conviction. Perhaps you will say that you have this conviction, but you should take care to remember that this feeling is not more than a delusion on your part. That firm conviction is most certainly not yet yours, for you do not display the conditions which necessarily must go with it always, you have not yet given up your sinful ways; you have not yet taken the first step which you ought to have taken the moment this firm conviction became yours, you do not yet fear sin as you should. You can very well think out the question in your own mind. A man never puts his hand into a hole which he knows to be occupied by a poisonous snake; nor does he ever knowingly partake of a food he has reason to believe has been poisoned. Nor will he thoughtlessly walk into a thicket of trees which harbours a lion. Then how can your hand and feet, your eyes and ears, dare to sin when you have the same degree of certainty in regard to the punishment and reward from God on your conduct in life? How in the name of reason can you throw yourself into a fire which you know will burn you to ashes? And always remember that the defensive ramparts built by firm conviction against sin are veritably as high as the heavens, so that Satan cannot scale them to get you, after you have once properly built them up.

Everyone who is purified, is purified through firmness of conviction. It is conviction which gives you the strength to bear hardships, even to the extent of persuading a king to abdicate his royal throne and take to the life of a mendicant. Conviction dissolves all difficulties. Conviction enables a man to see God. All ideas of any atoning sacrifice are false, for every kind of purity comes only from firm conviction. The only thing which delivers a man from sin, and advances him in sincerity and steadfastness, far ahead of the angels themselves, is conviction and conviction alone. All religions which fail to create this firmness of conviction are false. All religions which fail to show God by means beyond any shadow of doubt are false; and all those religions are false which contain nothing more than a handful of tales and fables about what happened in the past.”

I advise you all to reflect upon those words and to conform your life according to them. Speaking further on the choice of such a life, Hazrat Masih Maood (as) tells us:

“God exists even now, as He did in the days past; His powers too remain the same as they were in the past; and He is still as capable of showing signs as He was before. Then why should you be satisfied with stories and fables alone? The religion is dead and destroyed which contains nothing more than stories of miracles shown in the past; and the people are a dead people on whom God does not descend in grace and mercy, whom the Divine hand itself has not come down to purify. As a man is drawn towards the joys of this world when he sees its attractions with his own eyes; similarly, is man drawn towards God when he comes to know with perfect certainty that the spiritual joys are even sweeter. The appeal of Divine beauty takes such a hold on his mind that everything else appears to him of no more value than mere trash. Man is freed from sin only when he comes to know of the power of God, and of Divine retribution, on the basis of a firm conviction. Ignorance is the root of every fearlessness, and no one will be found devoid of the fear of God even to the least extent who partakes of Divine knowledge. When a householder knows that a dangerous flood is advancing on his house or that it has been surrounded by a fire on all sides, he will at once flee from it. Then how can you dare to leave your ways of life unaltered after your belief in the existence of God, in Divine retribution and reward, has hardened into a firm unshakable conviction? Therefore, open your eyes and carefully study the Law of God operating in the universe. Do not be like rats which only go digging and descending into the earth: be like a dove capable of flying into the heavens, which feels happy only when it is flying in the pure air of the loftier regions. After taking the bai'at of repentance at my hand, take care that you do not remain unaltered in your former sinful ways. Do not be like a snake that remains as much of a snake after it has shed its skin as ever it was before, remember death, which approaches you every moment, though you remain unaware. Do your best to purify

yourself, for a man can attain nearness to what is purity par excellence only when himself he becomes pure, as far as possible.”

To attain this purity, we should improve the way we pray. Hazrat Ahmad advises us as follows:

“But the most important question is how to win the blessings. To this question God Himself has given the answer, He says: *wasta’inou bis sabrer wassalaat* i.e., Seek help from God with prayer and perseverance. What is *salat*? It is a prayer addressed to God in true humility of spirit and the fullest awareness of His purity, His raiseworthiness, His holiness, coupled with a burning desire on the part of the devotee for Divine forgiveness, and for blessing on the Holy Prophet. Therefore, when you stand up for prayer, do not, like ignorant people, confine yourself to the prescribed Arabic text, for the prayers and the *istighfar* of many people is only formal, with no reality in it. When you _stand up for prayer, do not, like ignorant people, confine yourself to the prescribed Arabic text; over and above the prayers found in the Quran, which is the Word of God, and in the Hadith, which is the word of the Holy Prophet, address your petitions to the Lord in your own language, with heartfelt humility which should leave a lasting effect on the mind. In prayer lies the remedy for the coming tribulations. You have no idea what the coming day has in store for you, Therefore, ere the day dawn, pray every time that for you it should be a day of blessings and peace.”

I am trying my best to read the most important texts of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) to our members. Should you need any clarification over any matter, I suggest you ask me about them. You have a unique opportunity to tread this path with assistance. It is up to you to take it or not. Remember well what Hazrat Ahmad (as) has said in the last sentence. Before dawn, wake up and pray so that Allah may grant you a day full of blessings and peace. Members should try this and see for themselves how far it is true. They will definitely find them to be true. Our Lord Allah should have the utmost importance in our life. We ignore this fact to our own peril. May Allah help each one amongst us to develop our relationship with Allah to its fullest extent, *incha Allah. Ameen.*